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Hunted for murders, assaults, carjackings and running drug rings, the faces of Lake County's "Top 10" most wanted gang members soon will be plastered on Web sites and police stations throughout the area.

Several Lake County law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms joined forces Monday to release a list of the most sought-after violent offenders among the more than 2,000 gang members operating in the county.

Authorities hope to send a message to reduce the number of kids being enlisted into gang activity.

"These top 10 have committed at least 15 major felonies," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a Highland Park Republican who has helped provide federal funding on the issue. "As we've seen too many times, many of the shooters that gangs use are young boys just in the seventh grade."

State figures show a 3.1 percent increase in serious crime in Lake County from 2005 to 2006, while statewide there was a 1.7 percent drop in violent and property crimes.

"About all of the communities are about fed up with what's going on with the increase in gang activity," Mundelein Police Chief Raymond Rose said. "No community can be a safe zone. Residents cannot, should not be afraid to contact us."

Authorities are asking for the public's help in identifying and capturing these gang members. If they have information, people should contact their local police department or the Lake County sheriff's office.

Kirk helped secure an \$846,000 U.S. Department of Justice grant to set up a new Northern Illinois Gang Taskforce last month. It will coordinate federal and local law enforcement agencies fighting violent drug gangs operating out of Waukegan. Local law enforcement can now pursue federal prosecution and longer sentencing.

Anyone convicted faces 20 years in federal prison without parole instead of the less than five years in a state prison. That's incentive for rank-and-file gang members to turn against their gangs and help the taskforce, officials said.

"Our work is based on tips from the community," said Andy Traver, special agent in charge with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. "That's where the leads have to come from. We need to get cooperating sources that help us."

Those tend to be former gang members, affiliates, or wannabes, he said.

At the top of the wanted list is Jose Pedro Delgado, a Waukegan gang leader sought in the murder of Jesus Montes-DeOca, 18, of Waukegan, who was killed on his way to a gym Oct. 19, 2003.

Lake County towns have been working individually with the ATF for more than three years, but it hasn't made enough of an impact, Traver said.

"It's kind of hit or miss," he said. "There's no countywide coordination. You hit one town and you work a gang there and they go to another town."

With this new initiative, agencies will be able to share information about gang members and problem areas in their communities, he said.

The Top 10 list will soon be available on the sheriff's Web site, [www.co.lake.il.us/SHERIFF/Person/IndexMostWanted.asp](http://www.co.lake.il.us/SHERIFF/Person/IndexMostWanted.asp). As gang members are

captured, new criminals will be added to the list.